

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLP #2725/01 2832113
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 102113Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5226
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 7125
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 4499
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 8396
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 5623
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2849
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 3041
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4895
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5487
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0090
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0580
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 002725

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: EVO JUST SAYS NO TO U.S. ANTI-DRUG FORCES

REF: LA PAZ 2712

Classified By: EcoPol Chief Mike Hammer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Following on comments he made October 8 about implementing a constitutional ban on U.S. bases (reftel), Bolivian President Evo Morales unveiled plans October 9 to end cooperation "soon" with U.S. military elements providing support to Bolivian counter-narcotics forces. He said it was a question of national dignity and that U.S. "military" affiliated with counter-narcotics efforts would have to leave the country, although he referred to non-military DEA agents and uniformed military interchangeably. "I am happily, finally terminating (counter-narcotics cooperation with the U.S.) ... no uniformed armed foreigners will operate here." Morales claimed he had video proof that members of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) had participated in shootings at demonstrations in his native Cochabamba state. Evo personally said he has seen uniformed U.S. DEA agents with Bolivian troops and police in SUVs many times.

Bolivian Troops Were Tools of Uncle Sam

¶2. (U) During an October 9 press conference alongside Cuban veterans of Che Guevara insurgency efforts, Morales stated the Bolivian troops that captured Che in 1967 were "instruments of the empire" and discounted their right to an augmented pension, questioning their patriotism versus their greed. Although he allowed that Bolivian "so-called ex-combatants" had a right to honor the 55 troops that died fighting Che, he described these troops as "misdirected." He rhetorically asked why the troops did not fight U.S. troops instead of Che's band.

Tools of the Empire Strike Back

¶3. (U) The Retired Military Officer Association expressed its indignation with a paid advertisement: "What is truly shameful and disgusting is that the very Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces (Morales), who invokes the name of the soldier at his convenience, attends homage ceremonies to honor precisely the murderers... (thus) offending the memory of their victims." The statement also affirms the readiness of the Bolivian military to force out any foreign

interference. There has been a torrent of criticism from pundits, political leaders, and retired military officers concerning Morales' participation in the October 8 event honoring the 40th Anniversary of Che's death and subsequent remarks (ref).

School (of the America)'s Out, Forever

¶4. (U) Morales also announced October 9 that Bolivia would "gradually" stop sending troops to the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), which he referred to as its former name, the School for the Americas (SOA). Morales asserted the institute teaches "high ranking officers to confront their own people, to identify social movements as their enemies." The official Bolivian news service linked the school to military dictatorships and highlighted Bolivian alumni, although it did not mention current Minister of the President (Chief of Staff) Juan Quintana's attendance.

Evo to FARC: Ballots Not Bullets

¶5. (U) Morales also urged the Colombian FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) to disarm and seek power through democratic means with social movements. "In the past, people raised arms against the empire. Now we see that the empire raises them against the people. I urge (the FARC) not to play their game." On October 10, the 25th anniversary of continual democratic governance in Bolivia, President Morales emphasized his democratic credentials, referring repetitively to his 53.7 percent electoral victory in 2005.

¶6. (C) Comment: Post has been scratching its head over Evo's confusing October 8 remarks to prohibit nonexistent U.S. bases in Bolivia. The other boot has dropped and it appears Evo is casting a wide, although still nebulous, net over U.S. counter-narcotics assistance. But confusion continues. As with his previous remarks, Evo prompts many questions by not defining (or perhaps understanding) exactly what forces he's talking about. He refers to all "uniformed, armed foreigners," at the same time as he is keen to have a military presence from Venezuela and Cuba. He decries our presence and then acts surprised at seeing it (DEA agents with Bolivian troops). It remains to be seen what concrete action, if any, will come of Morales' statements. End Comment.

GOLDBERG